

## **The route for geographical enquiry**

The route for geographical enquiry (shown on the following page) was originally developed by the Geography 16–19 Project. It was based on a hierarchy of questions designed to help teachers to structure students' learning by following through a sequence of steps, with questions, that guide students through the enquiry.

- Observation and perception: What?
- Definition and description: What? Where?
- Analysis and explanation: How? Why?
- Prediction and Evaluation: What might? What will? What impact?
- Decision making: What decision? With what impact?
- Personal evaluation and response: What do I think? What will I do next?

These are the processes explored through enquiry and the kind of questions that geographers ask. You may find this a useful template for developing your own planning. It is not intended to be a rigid sequence of questions that must always be followed in full. You can decide if it is appropriate to start in the middle or miss out one or more steps, such as decision-making. You could use a smaller loop, such as for a structured teacher-led enquiry analysing some photographs or statistics.

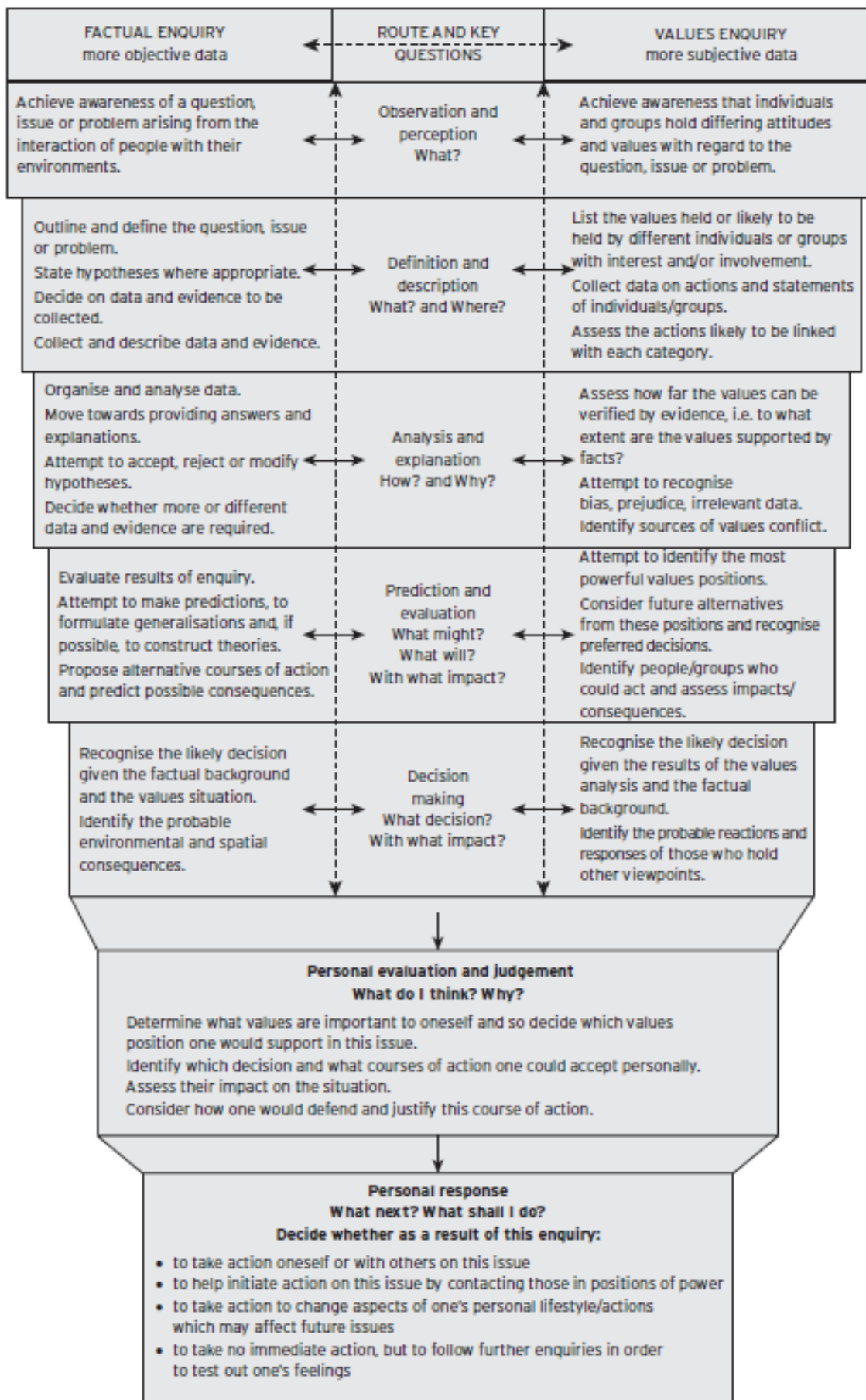
The route for enquiry is often used for geographical enquiries into themes or issues but it is equally used to plan work focused on a place (see example at the end of this paper). It is particularly applicable to the study of people-environment issues, especially those that involve a consideration of attitudes and values. This framework enables students to develop and justify their own values and responses, and gives opportunities for values analysis and values clarification. (You may find it useful to refer to the support sheet on [Values analysis](#)).

### **Enquiry in geography examinations**

In the past the route for enquiry was well known through its links with the 16–19 curriculum. The new geography examinations at A Level, taught from 2016, has re-introduced an independent investigation which gives post-16 students the opportunity to become geographers using the route for enquiry and develop their first-hand investigative and research skills.

The focus of the independent study is on:

- defining and developing their own question or issue
- collecting primary data, justifying the approaches selected and understanding the limitations of data
- gathering their own secondary data and including this into their report
- independent analysis and conclusions.



Source: Rawling, E. (2007) *Planning your Key Stage 3 Curriculum*, Sheffield: Geographical Association [geography.org.uk](http://geography.org.uk)

This involves students developing skills in posing relevant questions, a range of investigation techniques, primary and secondary research and report writing.

The GCSE specifications is based on an adaptation of this route for enquiry and requires candidates to 'develop their competence in applying sound enquiry and investigative approaches to questions and hypotheses (study like a geographer).' Through the fieldwork assessment they must show *'understanding of the kinds of question capable of being investigated through fieldwork and an understanding of the geographical enquiry processes appropriate to investigate these.'*

These requirements at both GCSE and A level are likely to impact on the key stage 3 curriculum as teachers recognise that they will need to develop enquiry skills using the route for enquiry throughout the secondary phase.

- Refer to [Fieldwork through enquiry](#)

### **Plan your own route for enquiry**

Study the outline for a unit of work planned around enquiry on 'Imagined places'. You can download a template for planning your own enquiry from [Planning for Enquiry](#).

## Imagined places: A scheme of work planned around enquiry

Example route for enquiry	Sequence of work planned via enquiry questions	Key concepts (examples)	Key processes/skills (examples)
<b>What? (observation and perception)</b>	What do we mean by imagined places? Look at books, TV, films, plays that create a place ( <i>Wind in the Willows, Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Narnia, Neighbours</i> , internet virtual places). How and why are we interested in imagined places? Why are they more important today with the internet? What can these places tell us about the world and how we see it?	Place Image, perception, identity Scale Interdependence	Ask questions, think creatively Plan sequence of enquiry Use varied resources incl. books, films, TV Draw on personal experience
<b>What and where? (definition and description)</b>	Examine some examples of imagined places. What features are important and how are they expressed? Use of maps, pictures, sounds, other senses. Can we distinguish between real places that are fictionalised and truly imagined places?	Place Space – location, patterns Scale	Collect, record and display evidence Use maps and images Think creatively and apply geographical ideas and understanding
<b>How and why? (analysis and explanation)</b>	How does an author/scriptwriter produce an imagined place? What geographical features are apparent and how do they relate to the real world? How is location/relative location addressed? What is the relationship between characters and places? Do different characters see it differently? Can you create your own imagined place (with a story or narrative to accompany it)? What big ideas in geography are illuminated?	Place Process – human and physical Scale Environmental Interaction Interdependence	Explore real and relevant contemporary contexts Use maps, images Communicate in talk, writing and images Use geographical imagination and creativity
<b>What might happen? What impact? What decision? (evaluation, prediction and decision making)</b>	Why do we need imagined places? Can they/do they affect our relationship with the real world? Are there issues arising about our involvement with fictional and imaginary places? What about internet communities? Will internet and virtual places alienate/separate some sectors of society from the world around them? What will happen? What can/should be done?	Place Interdependence Process Cultural Diversity	Explore real and contemporary contexts (especially internet) Draw on own experience Use maps, images and text Evaluate and predict Apply geographical knowledge and skills in new ways
<b>What do I think? Why? What will I do next? (personal evaluation and response)</b>	What do I think about the role of books, films and internet in creating places? How can I find out more? Will I read more about places? Invent or create a place in words, pictures or maps? Critically consider some virtual reality sites?	Place Geographical imagination Cyberspace Virtual reality Future	Make a personal response and communicate effectively in writing (e.g. a story or poem), talk (e.g. a radio play) and/or graphical images (e.g. artwork or map) Evaluate and identify quality/bias